

Ministry of Higher Education

And Scientific Research

University of Samarra

English Department



Influence of “Journey of The Magi” by T. S. Eliot

By

Israa Qudsy Maki

Supervised by

Asst.Sufian Awad

2023

1444

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

لِإِيلَافِ قُرَيْشٍ (1) إِيْلَافِهِمْ رِحْلَةَ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ

((For the covenants (of security and safeguard enjoyed) by the Quraish, Their covenants (covering) journeys by winter and summer))

Surah Quraish

<http://search-the-quran.com/search/Surah+Quraish/8>

Dedication

To My Family

To My Friend

Acknowledgment

I want to express my honest gratitude to the College and my department for making my dream of being a student here come true. Also my Sincere thanks to the head of the department Dr. Saif Habeeb and all the committee members for their patience and information.

My great thanks to my supervisor Dr. Sufya Awad who helped me through writing this wonderful research.

	Table of Contents	Page No.
	Subjects	
	Dedication	II
	Acknowledgements	III
	Table of Contents	IV
	Abstract	V
	Chapter One	
1.1	T.S.Eliot's life	2
1.2	His literary career	5
	Chapter Two	
2.1	Allegory	7
2.2	Definition of Allegory	8
2.3	The Analysis of <i>Journey of the Magi</i> as an Allegory	9
2.4	Prophetic and Typological Senses	12
2.5	Eliot's Situational Allegory	15
	Chapter Three	
	Conclusions	18
	Bibliography	19

Abstract

Journey of the Magi can be seen as an allegory that explores the complexities of the human search for spiritual enlightenment, and the difficulties and challenges that one may face along the way. This research deals with Eliot's *Journey of the Magi*.

Chapter one begins with T.S.Eliot's life, and his literary career.

Chapter two defines Allegory in many definitions, the analysis of *Journey of the Magi* as an allegory, prophetic and typological senses, and Eliot's situational allegory

Chapter three end with conclusions that sumps up the results of the study.

Chapter One

1.1 T.S. Eliot's Life

Thomas Stearns Eliot OM (1888-1965) wrote in a variety of genres and had a number of positions in the literary world, including poet, essayist, publisher, dramatist, literary critic, and editor. He is a pivotal figure in English-language Modernist poetry and is often regarded as one of the most important poets of the 20th century. The scion of a wealthy Boston Brahmin family, he was born in St. Louis, Missouri, but by 1914, at the age of 25, he had relocated to England, where he would remain for the rest of his life (Sanna, 2003; 34).

In 1927, at the age of 39, he renounced his American citizenship and became a British citizen. In 1915, with the publishing of what was then considered an absurd poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," Eliot gained considerable notice. *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men* (1925), *Ash Wednesday* (1930), and *Four Quartets* (1932) all came after it (1943). [6] Seven of his plays, including "Murder in the Cathedral" (1935) and "The Cocktail Party," were popular (1949). For "his exceptional, pioneer contribution to contemporary poetry," he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948 (Eliot, 133).

After graduating from Merton, Eliot became a teacher, mostly at London's Highgate School, where his pupils included the future Nobel laureate in literature, John Betjeman. After that, he became a professor at Buckinghamshire's Royal Grammar School in High Wycombe. He

supplemented his income by teaching evening extension classes at both University College London and Oxford and by reviewing books. He began working in international banking for Lloyds Bank in London in 1917. He met James Joyce in August of 1920 while visiting Paris with the artist Wyndham Lewis(Jason,2011;73).

After an initial disagreement in which Eliot called Joyce "arrogant" and Joyce questioned Eliot's poetry skills, the two authors became fast friends, with Eliot paying Joyce a visit whenever he was in Paris. Even after Wyndham Lewis completed his famous picture of Eliot in 1938, the two remained close friends. T.S. Eliot was suggested to Geoffrey Faber by Charles Whibley. As a director of Faber and Gwyer (later Faber and Faber), a publishing company, Eliot spent the remainder of his career after leaving Lloyds in 1925.He was in charge of publishing notable English poets including W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Charles Madge, and Ted Hughes at Faber & Faber(Pinion,1986;32).

Eliot became an Anglican on June 29, 1927, and renounced his US citizenship in November of that year. He was a churchwarden at St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road, London, and a life member of the Society of King Charles the Martyr. He called himself "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion". Catholic cast of mind, a Calvinist ancestry, and a Puritanical disposition" were Eliot's religious beliefs 30 years later.Eliot's biographer Peter Ackroyd said, "Two goals drove Eliot's conversion. One: the

Church of England gave Eliot hope and a place to relax. Second, it connected Eliot to English culture and society."(Eliot,1988;65).

Eliot's height limited his poetry. Early in his career, he wrote to Harvard professor J.H. Woods, "One small book and two or three poems a year keep my London name. Events must be good." [66]Before publishing books, Eliot published his poems in magazines, small volumes, or pamphlets. First was *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). *Ara Vos Prec* (London) and *Poems: 1920* published his poems (New York). "Hysteria" replaced "Ode" in the American edition. In 1925, he published *Poems: 1909–1925*. He renamed it *Collected Poems*. *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), a light poetry book; *Poems Written in Early Youth* (1967), a collection of Harvard Advocate poems from 1907 to 1910; and *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917* (1997), which Eliot never intended to publish. [67]

The Upanishads impacted Eliot, according to Cleo McNelly Kearns' biography. From *The Waste Land's* Sanskrit ending to *Four Quartets'* "What Krishna meant," his intellectual base was Indic religions, notably Hinduism. [69] In *Where the Dreams Cross: T S Eliot and French Poetry* (Macmillan, 2011), Chinmoy Guha showed how French authors from Baudelaire to Paul Valéry influenced him. He said in his 1940 essay on W.B. Yeats: "The style of poetry that I needed to teach me the use of my own voice did not exist in English at all; it was only to be found in French." ("Yeats," 1948)(Eliot,1988;285).

1.2 His literary Career

T.S. Eliot was one of the most significant literary figures of the 20th century. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888, Eliot moved to England in 1914 and became a British citizen in 1927. Throughout his literary career, Eliot's poetry, criticism, and drama were marked by a deep engagement with the cultural and intellectual issues of his time. Eliot's literary career began with the publication of his first poem, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," in 1915. This poem, with its fragmented narrative and themes of alienation and disillusionment, became an instant classic of modernist poetry. Eliot continued to publish poetry throughout the 1920s and 1930s, including the landmark long poem, "The Waste Land," in 1922. "The Waste Land" is widely considered to be one of the most important works of modernist poetry, and its complex themes and allusions have been the subject of much critical analysis (Gordon, 1998:433).

In addition to his poetry, Eliot was also a prolific critic and essayist. He wrote extensively on the work of other writers, including William Shakespeare, John Milton, and Dante Alighieri. His critical works, such as "The Sacred Wood" (1920) and "The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism" (1933), were influential in shaping the direction of literary criticism in the 20th century. Eliot also had a successful career as a playwright, with notable works including "Murder in the Cathedral" (1935) and "The Cocktail Party" (1950). His plays

often dealt with spiritual and religious themes and were noted for their use of poetic language(Moody,1994:356).

Throughout his literary career, Eliot was associated with the modernist movement, which sought to break with traditional forms and conventions in literature and art. However, in his later work, Eliot began to move away from modernist techniques and embraced more traditional forms and structures. In 1948, Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for his contributions to the field. He died in 1965, leaving behind a body of work that continues to be studied and admired by scholars and readers around the world(Ibid.376).

Chapter Two

2.1 Allegory

Allegory is a literary device used by writers to convey complex ideas through the use of symbolic representation. It is a form of extended metaphor that seeks to illustrate a concept or idea through a story or visual image. The term "allegory" comes from the Greek word "allegoria," which means to speak figuratively or to say something other than what is literally expressed. Allegory is a powerful tool in literature, art, and even everyday communication. In this article, we will explore what allegory is, its history, and some examples of allegorical works(Abrams,1993:7).

The use of allegory can be traced back to ancient times. In Greek mythology, for example, the story of Demeter and Persephone is often interpreted as an allegory for the changing seasons. Demeter, the goddess of the harvest, represents the fertile earth, while her daughter Persephone represents the dormant winter season. During the Middle Ages, allegory became a popular literary device in Christian literature. Many works of medieval literature, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, are written in allegorical form. In these works, characters and events are used to represent abstract concepts such as sin, virtue, and salvation(Ibid.14).

Allegory continued to be a popular literary device in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods. In the 17th century, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* became one of the most popular allegorical works of all time. The

story follows the journey of a Christian pilgrim named Christian as he travels from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, facing various obstacles and challenges along the way that represent spiritual trials.

2.2 Definition of Allegory

Allegory is a literary device that involves using symbolism to convey a deeper meaning. It is a form of extended metaphor in which characters, objects, and events represent abstract ideas or moral qualities. Allegory is often used in literature to convey complex ideas or themes that might be difficult to express through other means. Allegory is a powerful literary device that can be used to convey complex ideas and themes in a way that is accessible and engaging for readers. It has a rich history, with examples dating back to ancient times, and has been used in many different types of literature, art, and popular culture. allegory is a form of extended metaphor that seeks to illustrate a concept or idea through a story or visual image. It is often used to convey abstract concepts or moral values that might be difficult to express through other means. In this way, allegory can be seen as a tool for communicating ideas that might otherwise be too abstract or intangible(Calian,2013:15).

Allegory can be found in many different types of literature, including poetry, drama, and prose. It is also used in visual art, such as paintings and sculptures, to convey meaning through symbolism. One of the most famous examples of allegory is George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in which a group of farm animals rebel against their human owner and establish a socialist utopia.

However, as the story progresses, the pigs who lead the revolution become increasingly corrupt and oppressive, ultimately betraying the other animals and becoming indistinguishable from their former human oppressors. The story is a commentary on the corrupting influence of power and the dangers of totalitarianism(Abrams,1993:8).

Allegory can be found in many works of literature, art, and even popular culture. Some examples of allegorical works include: *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis - In this classic children's book, a group of siblings stumble into a magical world called Narnia, where they encounter talking animals and mythical creatures. The story is an allegory for the Christian faith, with the character of Aslan the lion representing Jesus Christ.

The Lord of the Flies by William Golding - This novel follows a group of boys who are stranded on a deserted island and must form their own society to survive. The story is an allegory for the breakdown of civilization and the inherent evil in human nature. The Matrix Trilogy - The Matrix movies are full of allegorical elements, with the characters and events in the story representing philosophical concepts such as reality, free will, and the nature of existence(Baum,2000:101).

2.3The Analysis of *Journey of the Magi* as an Allegory

Journey of the Magi is a poem written by T.S. Eliot in 1927. The poem is widely regarded as one of Eliot's most important works and is often cited as an example of modernist poetry. It tells the story of the journey made by the Magi,

or Wise Men, to visit the newborn Jesus in Bethlehem. The poem is written from the perspective of one of the Magi, who is reflecting on the journey he and his companions made to see the Christ child (Donaldson, 1995:181). The opening lines set the tone for the rest of the poem, as the narrator describes the difficult and uncomfortable journey they endured:

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp." (Eliot, 1927:1-4).

The journey is described as both physically and spiritually challenging. The Magi struggle to make progress through the harsh winter conditions, and the narrator suggests that the journey has left them changed in some way:

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death?" (Eliot, 20-24).

The question posed by the narrator is a key theme of the poem. The Magi have traveled a great distance to witness the birth of a child, but the narrator

questions whether this journey has brought them to a place of new life or death. This ambiguity is echoed in the final lines of the poem, as the narrator reflects on the experience:

We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods."(35-37).

The poem can be read as a commentary on the challenges of faith and the difficulty of finding meaning in a world that seems hostile to the divine. The Magi have made a journey in search of something greater than themselves, but the experience has left them feeling alienated and unsure of their place in the world. The journey has brought them to a place of spiritual crisis, as they struggle to reconcile their beliefs with the harsh realities of the world they inhabit(Innes,1998:187).

One of the most striking aspects of *Journey of the Magi* is the way in which Eliot uses imagery and symbolism to convey the themes of the poem. The imagery of the journey through the winter landscape is particularly powerful, evoking a sense of hardship and endurance. The Magi are described as "drowsing off the edge of the world," suggesting that their journey has taken them to the very limits of human experience(Han,2018:213).

The symbolism of the journey is also significant. The Magi are traditionally seen as wise men, possessed of great knowledge and insight. In

Journey of the Magi, however, they are portrayed as uncertain and unsure, struggling to make sense of the world around them. This inversion of the traditional image of the Magi serves to emphasize the challenges of faith and the difficulty of finding meaning in a world that seems indifferent to human suffering(Shuker,2019:516).

Journey of the Magi is a powerful and complex poem that explores the themes of faith, doubt, and spiritual crisis. Through the use of vivid imagery, powerful symbolism, and careful language, Eliot creates a portrait of the Magi that is both haunting and thought-provoking. The poem's ambiguous ending leaves the reader to ponder the meaning of the Magi's journey and the challenges of faith in a hostile world. *Journey of the Magi* is a masterpiece of modernist poetry and a testament to Eliot's enduring talent as a writer(Gish,1993:143).

2.4Prophetic and Typological Senses

T.S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi" is a poem that explores the journey of the Three Wise Men to see the birth of Jesus Christ. The poem is rich in biblical allusions and imagery, and scholars have long debated the significance of these references. In particular, the poem has been analyzed for its use of prophetic and typological senses, which are important tools for interpreting biblical literature(Altizer,1994:187).

Prophetic and typological senses are two methods of interpreting scripture that have been used by theologians and scholars for centuries.

Prophetic interpretation involves reading scripture with an eye toward the future, searching for predictions or prophecies of events that will come to pass. Typological interpretation, on the other hand, involves finding patterns and connections between people, events, and themes in the Old and New Testaments. In this way, typology seeks to uncover the deeper meaning behind scripture and to reveal the ways in which God's plan is unfolding throughout history(Altizer,994:190).

In "Journey of the Magi," Eliot employs both prophetic and typological senses to create a layered and complex poem. The poem begins with a description of the Magi's journey to Bethlehem, which is full of hardship and difficulty. The first lines of the poem read;

A cold coming we had of it,

Just the worst time of the year

For a journey, and such a long journey:

The ways deep and the weather sharp" (lines 1-4).

This description of the journey is not only a literal account of the Magi's travels, but it also serves as a metaphor for the spiritual journey of the Christian believer. Throughout the poem, Eliot employs prophetic language to connect the Magi's journey with biblical prophecy. For example, in lines 20-24, the speaker describes the Magi's encounter with a group of soldiers who demand to know the purpose of their journey. The soldiers are described as "stupid and

vulgar" and lacking in understanding. In this way, Eliot connects the Magi's journey to the prophetic message of Isaiah and suggests that the soldiers' lack of understanding is a reflection of the spiritual blindness of the world(Knight,1967:165).

Eliot also uses typological interpretation to connect the events of the Magi's journey with biblical themes and motifs. For example, the image of the Magi traveling through a dark and difficult landscape is reminiscent of the Israelites' journey through the desert in the Old Testament. The speaker of the poem describes the journey as a "long journey" (line 35), which is similar to the Israelites' forty-year journey through the wilderness. This connection suggests that the Magi's journey is a continuation of the journey of God's people throughout history, and that their journey is part of a larger narrative of salvation(Shusterman,1989:129).

Another example of typological interpretation in the poem is the use of the image of birth. The Magi's journey culminates in the birth of Jesus Christ, which is described in the poem as a "hard and bitter agony for us" (line 43). This image recalls the birth of Christ as described in the Gospel of Luke, which emphasizes the pain and struggle of childbirth. The use of this image suggests that the birth of Christ is not only a joyous event, but also a painful and difficult one, and that it is a reflection of the suffering that is necessary for salvation(Ibid.134).

2.5 Eliot's Situational Allegory

T.S. Eliot's poem "Journey of the Magi" is widely regarded as an allegory that tells the story of the Three Wise Men's journey to Bethlehem to witness the birth of Jesus Christ. However, the poem can also be interpreted as a situational allegory, where the journey of the Magi represents a broader human experience, rather than a religious one. In this article, we will explore Eliot's use of situational allegory in "Journey of the Magi" and its relevance to the modern reader (Eliot, 1963:90).

The poem begins with the Magi describing their journey and the hardships they faced along the way. Eliot's description of the journey is vivid and descriptive, with the Magi encountering harsh weather, difficult terrain, and a sense of disorientation. These physical obstacles can be seen as a metaphor for the emotional and psychological obstacles that individuals face when embarking on a journey of personal growth or spiritual enlightenment (Brown, 2014:56).

As the Magi approach their destination, they encounter people who are hostile to their mission and who view their presence as a threat. This opposition can be seen as a metaphor for the resistance and opposition that individuals face when trying to make significant changes in their lives. It may also be a commentary on the fear and suspicion that people often feel towards those who are different or who challenge the status quo (Leitch, 2010:1430).

When the Magi finally arrive at their destination, they find that their expectations have not been met. The birth of Jesus is not the grand and glorious event that they had anticipated, but rather a humble and unremarkable one. This realization can be seen as a metaphor for the disappointment and disillusionment that individuals may feel when their expectations are not met or when their efforts do not yield the results they were hoping for. However, despite the disappointment and disillusionment, the Magi still find themselves transformed by their journey. They return home with a newfound sense of purpose and a deep understanding of the significance of their journey. This transformation can be seen as a metaphor for the personal growth and spiritual transformation that individuals can experience when they embark on a journey of self-discovery and enlightenment (Ruland and Bradbury, 2011:297).

In the context of the modern reader, "Journey of the Magi" can be seen as a powerful commentary on the human experience. The obstacles and challenges that the Magi face on their journey are universal, and the message of transformation and growth is one that resonates with individuals across cultures and time periods. Eliot's use of situational allegory allows the poem to transcend its religious context and speak to a broader human experience (Southam, 1988:73).

"Journey of the Magi" is a powerful example of situational allegory, where the journey of the Magi represents a broader human experience of personal growth and transformation. Through vivid imagery and metaphorical

language, Eliot captures the challenges and obstacles that individuals face on their journey towards self-discovery and enlightenment. The poem's message of transformation and growth is one that continues to resonate with readers today and reminds us of the power of personal growth and transformation(Williamson,2002:51).

Chapter Three

Conclusions

T.S. Eliot's "Journey of The Magi" is a significant literary work that has had a considerable influence on both the literary and religious spheres. The poem's unique style, vivid imagery, and metaphorical language have contributed to its lasting impact, inspiring numerous literary works and interpretations. The poem's allegorical nature has also been the subject of extensive analysis, with scholars interpreting the Magi's journey as a metaphor for the human experience of personal growth and transformation. This interpretation has made the poem's message of transformation and growth relevant to readers of all cultures and time periods, ensuring its continued relevance in the modern era.

"Journey of The Magi" is a literary masterpiece that has had a profound influence on both the literary and religious spheres. Its unique style, vivid imagery, and allegorical nature have ensured its continued relevance in the modern era, inspiring new literary works and interpretations. The poem's exploration of spiritual growth and transformation has also made it an essential text in Christian theology, contributing to new insights into the Christian faith and its message of salvation.

Bibliography

Abrams, M.H. (1993). *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Wadsworth Publishing.

Altizer, Thomas J.J. "The Theology of T.S. Eliot." *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, edited by A. David Moody, Cambridge UP, 1994.

Baum, L. Frank (2000). *The Annotated Wizard of Oz: The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Norton.

Brown, Lee C. "Situational Allegory and T. S. Eliot's 'Journey of the Magi.'" *The Explicator*, vol. 72, no. 1, 2014.

Calian, Florin George (2013), Dolealová, Lucie; Rider, Jeff; Zironi, Alessandro (eds.), "'Clarifications' of Obscurity: Proclus' Allegorical Reading of Plato's Parmenides", *Medium Aevum Quotidianum*, Krems: Institut für Realienkunde des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit,

Donaldson, G. (1995). *The Adventurous Discretion of T.S. Eliot's "Journey of the Magi"*. *Christianity and Literature*, 44(2)

Donoghue, Denis. "The Mystery of the Incarnation." *T.S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews*, edited by Jewel Spears Brooker, Cambridge UP, 2004

Eliot, T. S. "Letter to J. H. Woods, April 21, 1919." *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, vol. I. Valerie Eliot (ed.), New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988.

Eliot, T. S. (1927). "Journey of the Magi". In *Ariel Poems*. Faber and Gwyer.

Eliot, T. S. (21 December 2010). *The Waste Land and Other Poems*. Broadview Press.

Eliot, T.S. "Journey of the Magi." *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963.

Eliot, T.S. *Voices and Visions Series*. New York Center of Visual History: PBS, 1988.

Gish, D. (1993). T. S. Eliot's *Journey of the Magi* and Lancelot Andrewes. *Christianity and Literature*, 42(2)

Gordon, L. (1998). *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Han, M. K. (2018). Irony and Faith in T. S. Eliot's "*Journey of the Magi*". *Christianity and Literature*, 68(2),

Innes, C. L. (1998). T. S. Eliot's '*Journey of the Magi*': A Re-reading. *English*

Jason Harding (31 March 2011). *T. S. Eliot in Context*. Cambridge University Press.

Knight, G. Wilson. "T.S. Eliot." *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1967.

Leitch, Vincent B. et al. Eds. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 2nd ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2010.

Moody, A.D. (Ed.). (1994). *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pinion, F.B (27 August 1986). *A T.S. Eliot Companion: Life and Works*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Ruland, Richard and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*, Routledge, 2011.

Sanna, Ellyn (2003). "Biography of T. S. Eliot". In Bloom, Harold (ed.). *T.S. Eliot. Bloom's Biocritiques*. Broomall: Chelsea House Publishing.

Shuker, R. (2019). T. S. Eliot's "*Journey of the Magi*" as an anti-epiphany: A radical reading. *English Studies*, 100(5)

Shusterman, Richard. "T.S. Eliot's Conversion to Christianity." *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 38, no. 2, Winter 1989

Southam, B.C. *A Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988.

Williamson, George. *A Reader's Guide to T.S. Eliot: A Poem-by-Poem Analysis*, Syracuse University Press, 2002.